



Insight

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Safety vital to success

We are an Army and nation at war; that translates into an exceptional level of work world-wide and recurring deployments. Those realities put a high premium on both the readiness and fitness of each of us for wartime service -- ethically, spiritually and physically.

Many parts of military life expose us to elevated levels of physical risk. We mitigate that risk through rigorous training, risk assessment and leadership at all levels across every discipline.

While we work with impressive technology, our principal resource and asymmetric advantage lies in our Soldiers and civilians; they "make intelligence happen" every day in the toughest environments and make sure we take care of each other.

The most sincere form of caring are those things that generate operational success and bring our people home in one piece to rejoin their families. Disciplined application of proven safety measures is a key component of that process, we can't afford to lose a single Soldier or civilian teammate. Accidents on and off duty are tragic and preventable. We need to improve our track

record during 2005.

The number of fatal accidents across our Army during 2004 was the highest we've experienced in 10 years. Over 260 of our comrades-in-arms lost their lives to preventable accidents last year; and we've suffered over 150 additional deaths so far in 2005. Almost 75 percent of these were vehicle related.

INSCOM recorded 33 accidents over the last 18 months. Fortunately, there were no fatalities, but a number of these involved serious injury requiring lengthy rehabilitation. It takes key people away from the front line in our ongoing fight and forces family, friends and teammates to pick up the slack. And, that relatively low number still did not achieve the Secretary of Defense's directed 50 percent reduction in accidents for every command. We can and we must do better.

Every one of us is a "safety officer" and fully empowered to stop unsafe acts on the spot. Despite the pace of current operations, we can and must do better. *Our safety goal for 2005 is 50 percent less accidents than we suffered in 2002.* Let's commit ourselves now to making that a reality and our new standard.



DA photo

Reinvigorate the risk assessment process; don't let it become a paper drill, make it a non-negotiable part of all operational planning and a key metric for evaluating leadership potential.

Make safety discipline your personal business; recognize leaders who aggressively integrate safety into on and off-post activities for the sake of their people. Never miss an opportunity to emphasize the standards and practical need.

We've already lost two INSCOM Soldiers to enemy attack in Fiscal Year 2005. Let's not lose any to preventable accidents; INSCOM and our Army need each of you "on point for the nation."

Maj. Gen. John F. Kimmons

Medal of Honor awarded



courtesy photo

(From left to right) Sgt. Matthew Keller, Pvt. Michael Seaman and Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith work together in the days leading up to the Battle of Baghdad Airport.

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) -- The White House announced March 29 that President George W. Bush will honor Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith by presenting his family the Medal of Honor on April 4, the second anniversary of his courageous actions during the Battle of Baghdad Airport.

Smith is the first to receive the military's highest award for actions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In action near the Baghdad Airport on April 4, 2003, Smith, a Soldier in Company B, 11th Engineer Battalion, working with units of the 3rd Infantry Division, was tasked to build a

compound to hold enemy prisoners, when his small force came under attack by more than 100 enemies.

Smith threw two grenades and fired rocket launchers at the enemy before manning a .50-caliber machine gun on an M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier to protect his troops. While engaging an enemy attacking from three sides, Smith fired more than 300 rounds from the machinegun before being killed.

He prevented the enemy from overtaking his unit's position, protected his Task Force's flank, and defended the lives of more than 100 Soldiers, according to his award citation.

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INSCOM officer honored



file photo

Lt. Col. Michael W. Childers (right) was awarded the Silver Cross of Honor at Peterson Air Force Base, Feb. 23.

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. - For his support to the U.S.-German partnership while stationed in Bad Aibling, Germany, one U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Soldier received special recognition.

Lt. Col. Gerhardt Weber, the German Air Force Liaison officer to the U.S. Air Force Academy, presented Lt. Col. Michael W. Childers, SMDC security office, the Silver Cross of Honor of the German Armed Forces at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., Feb. 23.

In making the presentation, Weber represented the German Defense Minister, Dr. Peter Struck, who signed the award.

The medal is based on the Iron Cross awarded to German

soldiers for bravery. The Silver Cross of Honor received by Childers is a version of the Iron Cross that, in special cases, is awarded to foreign military members who demonstrate an extraordinary dedication to cross cultural activities that foster understanding and mutual support.

The award was presented to Childers in recognition of his assistance and commitment in supporting the U.S.-German partnership when he served as the commander, 105th Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion, 66th MI Group in Bad Aibling, Germany, from June 2002 to June 2004.

"His leadership and cultural understanding were instrumental in strengthening German-American friendship. He

proved to be an outstanding representative of the U.S. Armed Forces," Weber said of Childers.

Childers integrated German Reserve Officers of the German Air Force Technical School Number One into various partnership activities between the two countries.

These activities included participation in all ceremonies, changes of command, laying of wreaths at the German/Allied cemeteries on Veterans Day, weapons qualifications and sports training. They also took part in fund-raisers that helped support the family readiness group. When Bad Aibling was officially closed, the reservists were involved in all the station closing activities.

66th MI Group has a ball

Soldiers enjoy chance to 'let their hair down'

by Pfc. Kari Jennings
66th MI Group

Soldiers and civilians of the 66th Military Intelligence Group dressed to impress as they gathered for its annual Winter Ball at the Maritim Conferenz Hotel in Darmstadt, Germany, Feb. 11.

The event provided attendees the opportunity for fun and camaraderie. A Social Hour served as the ice-breaker between existing unit members and new arrivals. After the commander, Col. Peter B. Zwack, and his wife, welcomed attendees as they passed through the receiving line, the Colors were then posted and a moment of silence was observed in honor of the service members who have died in support of freedom and democracy.

Spc. Michael G. Hurd, a guest of a member of 2nd MI Battalion, was deeply moved by the recognition of fallen comrades.

"It hasn't been that long since I came home from Iraq, and we lost a few comrades," he said. "The moment of silence gave me a chance to remember them and all of the others currently fighting the war on terrorism."

While everyone ate dinner, attendees were treated to music provided by the Darmstadt Middle School Jazz Band. After dinner entertainment featured The

Band Breite, a German band who played a wide variety of songs that spanned several decades and music genres.

"After all the hard work that went into the preparation for the ball, it was great to see how smoothly everything went and how much everyone enjoyed themselves," said Sgt. Judson Martin, operations sergeant, 66th MI Group.

In addition to the hard work the Soldiers put into the Winter Ball, the 66th MI Group's Family Readiness Groups played a major role in the success of the event.

"As an FRG it is our goal to work together with our military counterparts toward

the common goal of providing a strong support network and social outlet for all of our Soldiers and their families," said Christi Turner, FRG leader, 105th MI Battalion.

With members of the 66th MI Group spread across over seven countries in Central Europe, it can be difficult to bring everyone together.

"One of my favorite highlights of the evening was to be able to interact with the people I usually don't see on a day to day basis," said Spc. Ashley Dean of the 105th MI Battalion. "To be a part of something like that really showed how much I appreciate being a Soldier."



photo by Tim Pruitt

Soldiers and civilians from the 66th MI Group gathered for the unit's annual Winter Ball at the Maritim Conferenz Hotel in Darmstadt, Germany, Feb. 11

Avoid getting hooked by scam

ARLINGTON, Va. -- The Defense Finance and Accounting Service wants to assure all of its customers that every precaution is taken to secure data. With "phishing" scams occurring more frequently, DFAS customers should be aware that the agency and its Web-based system, myPay, will not ask for personal or financial information by email.

The individual DFAS customer has the ability to enter the myPay Web site with a PIN and to access the secure financial page to make changes to personal information.

"Phishing" attacks trick people into parting with personal information by luring them to false corporate Web sites or by requesting personal information be sent in a return email. According to the Federal Trade Commission, "Phishers" send emails or pop-up messages claiming to be from a business or organization you would routinely deal with - an Internet service provider, bank, online payment service or even a government agency. The message usually says that you need to 'update' or 'validate' your account information and might threaten dire consequence if you don't respond. You are directed to a Web site that mimics a legitimate organization's site. The purpose of the bogus site is to trick you into divulging personal information so the scam operators can steal your identity and make purchases or commit crimes in your name.

Tips to avoid "phishing" scam:

Use anti-virus software and keep it up to date. Some "phishing" emails contain software that can harm your computer or track your activities on the Internet without your knowledge.

Don't email personal or financial information. Email is not a secure method of transmitting personal information. If you initiate a transaction and want to provide your personal or financial



information through a Web site, look for indicators that the site is secure, such as an image of a lock icon on the browser's status bar or a Web site address that begins https: (the "s" stands for secure). Unfortunately, no indicator is foolproof; some "phishers" have forged security icons.

myPay combines a 128-bit encryption software (strong encryption) and Secure Socket Layers (SSL) technology with the user's social security number, PIN and secure Web address or DOD-specific telephone number all acting as safeguards against unauthorized access. This combination prevents information from being retrieved by outside sources while information is being transmitted. The secure technology provided to myPay customers meets or exceeds security standards in private industry.

For more information, go to myPay's official Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

Looking for a few good candidates

The Army is looking for highly motivated service members to fill its Warrant Officer ranks. Positions are open in all 45 specialties. Applicants with less than 12 years active federal service are encouraged to apply. For more information, call Chief Warrant Officer Eddie Mallard at 703-428-4655 or go to: www.usarec.army.mil/warrant.

Tuition assistance restored

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) -- Army tuition-assistance funding has been restored following a period in February and March when demand exceeded funding available at many installations.

The Army's Human Resources Command has also issued an exception to policy authorizing "after-the-fact" tuition assistance reimbursement for Soldiers who incurred personal expense to continue with college courses.

"This is a one-time exception due to the extraordinary circumstances in February and March when many Education Centers were unable to provide tuition assistance," said L. Dian Stoskopf, chief of Human Resource Command's Education Division, in a memorandum authorizing installation education centers to offer the exception.

"Our hope is that we can reach every one of the Soldiers who ran into a problem with tuition assistance," said Patricia Dumire, chief of Army Continuing Education Services for the Army's Installation Management Agency.

The Installation Management Agency distributes tuition-assistance funding from the Army to the installation education centers. This year the Army Budget Office has allocated funding to IMA on a quarterly basis. College enrollment timelines typically peak in September thru

March, which doesn't quite fit into the new system of equal quarterly allotments. In the future, funding for tuition assistance will be centralized to eliminate the problem, officials said.

Funding for tuition assistance dried up unexpectedly in March because of exceptionally high Soldier demand, officials said.

"In a way, this is a good news story," Dumire said. "Soldiers are taking advantage of their tuition assistance benefits to enhance their education."

The Installation Management Agency has received \$21.4 million to subsidize the immediate tuition assistance shortfall. Soldiers who paid for courses out of pocket or who did not register for a class due to lack of funding should go to their installation education center by April 15 to make arrangements for tuition reimbursement or late enrollment.

Requests for special exception after April 15 will be forwarded to Human Resources Command for consideration.



courtesy photo

Smith, family honored

Birgit Smith, widow of Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith, participates in the dedication of a building named after Smith in June of 2004. She said the action in which he was killed, and his performance in it, was natural for him. She said he probably would not have seen it as an attempt to do something heroic, but just as part of his job he needed to do well.

"What he did that day doesn't surprise me," she said. "Paul was married to the military before he was married to me, in a way, so I'm not surprised he would give himself up so his boys would come home."

Operation Military Child Care

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has joined forces with national agencies to help National Guard and Reserve families in finding and affording child care while deployed in support of the global war on terrorism.

"Child care, as you know, is one of the top (concerns) voiced by families as well as by commands on what's needed," said Jan Witte, director of the Pentagon's Office of Children and Youth. Her office monitors the new program, dubbed Operation Military Child Care.

DoD, in partnership with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, which administer the program, designed this initiative to benefit those who do not live near military installations, Witte said.

"We have a contract with NACCRRA to assist us in finding spaces outside the military community for those Guard and Reserve (members) who are deployed and active duty (people) who are not near a military installation," Witte said. "We also hope to assist in reducing the out-of-pocket expense to the service member."

When a parent is deployed, she said, the remaining parent may discover that child care is something the couple hadn't thought of before, and need is not the only consideration. The extra expense can be shocking.

While OMCC doesn't fully subsidize child care, it does



courtesy photo

Help is on the way for National Guard and Reserve parents who deploy.

work to reduce the financial burden, Witte said. The fees are based on a sliding scale that takes into consideration total family income and the care provider's actual cost, among other things.

To take part in the program, a family member would apply through NACCRRA via a special Web site or by a toll-free call to (800) 424-2246. The child-care provider also must apply — an important step because of how the subsidy, which comes through the Children and Youth office, is paid out, Witte noted.

"The subsidy goes to the program, not to the individual," she said.

The program began last month, but has been operational as a pilot program since late November 2004, Witte

said. About 40 families are through the application process.

"We feel like this is one area to provide assistance for the total force," she said. "We had not been doing much prior to this time for the Guard and Reserve as far as child care and school-age programs have gone." She said the new program could get about 5,000 Guard and Reserve servicemembers' children into child care.

NACCRRA also supports the Guard and Reserve through a program called Operation Child Care -- a voluntary program that provides up to six hours of free child care to Guard and Reserve families whose deployed servicemember is returning home for rest and recuperation.

*file photo*

Soldiers using the government travel card during deployment to foreign countries will be affected by the fee.

Travel card changes made

The Bank of America travel card provides point-of-sale service to cardholders by allowing them to make purchases outside the United States without making complex currency conversions. For this service, Visa and MasterCard currently add a one percent charge to all transactions made in foreign currency. This charge appears on the cardholder's statement imbedded in the total amount shown in U.S. dollars.

As of April 1, according to Visa and MasterCard, the one percent adjustment will no longer appear in the total amount shown on the statement. Instead the fee will appear on cardholder statements as a separate line item,

called International Transaction Fee. Please note that this fee was previously included in the U.S. dollar amount of such transactions. This fee is not disputable.

Bank of America will communicate this change to its cardholders in March via a forced billing. This means applicable accounts, even those without recent transactions, will receive the following statement message communicating the change: Effective April 1, Visa (or MasterCard) will no longer add a one percent adjustment factor and show it as part of the U.S. dollar amount. The one percent fee will appear as a separate line item ("International Transaction

Fee") for each transaction.

Disclosures and cardholder agreements will be amended to reflect this change.

Bank of America has reviewed the actions outlined above with GSA to ensure adherence to the master contract requirements.

Please note: MasterCard will assess the one percent fee based on transactions made in a foreign currency that requires conversion to U.S. dollars.

Visa will assess the fee based on transactions made outside the United States, with the exception of U.S. military bases. An exception is also being made for transactions made in U.S. dollars in U.S. territories.